DIARY SECTION VIII

American Ambulance
Field Service

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DIARY *of* SECTION VIII

AMERICAN AMBULANCE FIELD SERVICE

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1917

ATHENS

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April 30, 1918
7

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The human interest of this record sufficiently justifies publication, but it is printed primarily because its story is typical of the day's work of every Section in the Field Service, and in order that those Americans who have given ambulances and such practical encouragement may better realize how much their coöperation has actually accomplished.

There are now nine of these Sections attached to the Armies of France at various points along the Western Front from the Channel to Alsace, and in Salonika. During the next few weeks six more are being equipped and sent out. Of the men immediately going over to drive these new cars Chicago University is sending two units of twenty-five men each, and the Universities of Leland Stanford, Harvard, Wisconsin, and California are each contributing a like unit. More than sixty other American colleges and universities are already represented.

While all these men quite realize that their work is but a matter of duty to the cause and nation they wish to serve, the mere fact of their presence and voluntary sharing of the risk and labor involved has done much to convince France of the feeling that really exists for her in this country.

However great the help which new circumstances might make it possible for us to render the Allies by men and money, we can never offer any truer evidence of sympathy than by the service of which these pages bear tribute.

H. D. S.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
February, 1917

MEMBERS OF SECTION VIII

(At time of writing)

NAME	*ADDRESS*	*COLLEGE*
Donald C. Armour	Evanston, Ill.	Yale
Malbone H. Birckhead	New York	Harvard
Jackson H. Boyd	Harrisburg, Pa.	Princeton
Thomas B. Buffum	New York	Harvard
Charles T. Crocker	Fitchburg, Mass.	
Alden Davison	New York	Yale
Arthur G. Dodge	Weatogue, Conn.	Yale
Charles S. Faulkner	Keene, N. H.	
Frederick M. Forbush	Detroit, Mich.	
Oscar A. Iasigi	Boston, Mass.	Mass. Tech.
Leslie P. Jacobs	Laramie, Wyo.	Harvard
Grenville T. Keogh	New Rochelle, N. Y.	
Arthur E. Lumsden	Chicago, Ill.	
Austin B. Mason (Chef)	Boston, Mass.	Harvard
Bertwall C. Read	Bloomfield, N. J.	Princeton
Randolph Rogers	Grand Rapids, Mich.	
William B. Seabrook (Diary)	Atlanta, Ga.	Newberry
M. C. Shattuck	Bristol, N. H.	Amherst
Clarence B. Shoninger	New York	Yale
Edward C. Sortwell	Wiscasset, Me.	Harvard
Aubrey L. Thomas	Washington, D. C.	Princeton
George Van Santvood	Troy, N. Y.	Yale

CITATION OF SECTION VIII.

EXTRAIT D'ORDRE N° 80

En exécution des prescriptions réglementaires le Directeur du Service de Santé du 6e Corps d'Armée, cite à l'Ordre du Service de Santé du 6e Corps d'Armée

La Section Sanitaire Automobile Américaine N° 8 pour le motif suivant:—

"Sous la direction du Lieutenant Paroissien, Robert Charles, et du Commandant Adjoint Américaine Mason, Austin Blake, la Section Sanitaire Américaine N° 8, composée entièrement de volontaires, a assuré remarquablement le service quotidien des évacuations en allant chercher le plus loin possible les blessés, malgré un bombardement parfois violent.

"S'est particulièrement distinguée le 23 juin, en traversant à plusieurs reprises la nappe de gaz toxiques sous un feu intense sans aucun répit pendant plusieurs heures pour emmener au plus vite aux ambulances les intoxiqués."

Q. G. le 4 Août 1916
P. O. le Directeur du Service de Santé

Translation

EXTRACT FROM ORDER NO. 80

In carrying out the prescribed regulations the Director of the Sanitary Service of the 6th Army Corps "mentions" in the orders of the day of that service

THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE SANITARY SECTION No. 8, for the reason following:—

"Under the direction of Lieutenant Robert Charles Paroissien and of the American Deputy-Commandant Austin Blake Mason, the American Sanitary Section No. 8, composed entirely of volunteers, has been wonderfully efficient in the daily service of removing the wounded, going very long distances to fetch them, despite a bombardment sometimes of great intensity.

"It especially distinguished itself on June 23, by passing through the sheet of poisonous gas again and again, without respite, under a sustained fire, for many hours, bringing the men prostrated by the gas to the ambulances as speedily as possible."

Headquarters, 4 August, 1916
P. O. The Director of the Sanitary Service

DIARY OF SECTION VIII AMERICAN AMBULANCE FIELD SERVICE

Mourmelon le Grand, Monday, May 29.

This is to be the diary of Field Section No. 8 of the American Ambulance, sent to the front from Paris in the summer of 1916, and begun this day at Field Headquarters, where we have become a part of the Sixth Army Corps of the Twelfth Division of the Fourth Army. We are quartered nine kilometres behind the front (between five and six miles), and the click of the typewriter is accompanied by the steady booming of distant guns.

But there is a preface that must claim place before we tell of our arrival here, or even of our convoy journey through the Valley of the Marne—a preface written at Paris on wood and steel, with hammer, chisel, and file by the members of the section, laboring for days side by side with French mechanics and carpenters in the great shops of Kellner et Ses Fils, building and equipping the ambulance bodies and helping mount them on Ford chassis—a labor of love which went with whirlwind speed, for we were building our own cars, and we knew that each screw driven home to its socket by blistered but will-

ing hands meant that we were that much nearer the day of our departure for the front.

* * *

"Non palma sine pulvere" was a proverb that applied, in Roman days, to war as well as to Olympic games, and *"Pas de gloire sans graisse"* would make an even more appropriate motto for our section. We came expecting to don steel helmets, and were handed greasy overalls. We accepted the overalls willingly, and now we have the helmets, but let us tell of the overalls first.

It was about the first of May that our section assembled at Paris in the general headquarters of the American Ambulance Hospital in the suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine. The men were ready, but the cars were not. The chassis were standing in line in Kellner's great Carrosserie works, near Sevres, a couple of miles beyond the Bois de Boulogne, awaiting the construction of the wooden bodies which were only half completed. Kellner was short of men and we went to Kellner's. Within twenty-four hours men among us who had never swung anything heavier than a mashie were working at forge and anvil, making heavy iron braces and hinges; others drilled holes in the wood and iron; still others screwed and riveted the parts together. The sturdy women who were working by the hundreds in the place of men who had gone to the front stopped building bomb cases and handling heavy tools to watch us for an instant from time to time and bring us little sprigs of lily of the valley, *"le muget qui porte bonheur."* The French carpenters, who soon learned that we could work as well as they, and faster, became our friends and frequently in-

vited us to share the coarse bread and red wine which they kept loose in the same box with their tools, by way of refreshment between meals.

In eight days we had completed the work, and in another twenty-four hours a squad switched to the paint shops and covered the cars with the official battleship-gray. On Saturday, May 20, moving pictures were taken of the section at work in the shops, and on Sunday morning, May 21, the twenty cars were standing in line in front of the hospital at Neuilly, completely equipped and ready for the field.

Among the men of our section who worked as laborers and mechanics at Kellner's were many who had never handled tools before—the section includes professional men, business men, university students, Rhodes scholars, a minister of the Gospel, a winner of golf tournaments, and even a dramatic and musical critic. Yet none of us felt it strange to be working in sweat and grease. Indeed, our metamorphosis seemed a slight thing when some of us learned that in the great historic porcelain works of Sevres immediately across the river all art had ceased for the time being, and the men whose brains and hands had only a short time before been engaged in designing plates and vases of marvellous grace and beauty were now one and all occupied solely with the rude labor of constructing immense rough earthenware jars and acid-containers used in the manufacture of high explosives.

No matter what experiences may come to us later we shall never forget those days—the early morning rides from Neuilly through the Bois, the trees in leaf and

flower, the silent lakes with here and there a single swan —a splotch of white on the black surface of the water beneath tall cypress groves; perfect beauty, perfect peace; but the illusion is broken in an instant by the sound of a bugle—war is everywhere in France, even in the Bois; five minutes later we swing into the river road to Sevres, passing huge convoy trucks covered with immense, bulging canvas tops, occasional armored autos, aeroplanes mounted on auto frames being carried to and from the aviation ground across the river—another five minutes and we are in the shops amid the clanging anvils, rasping drills, the clattering noise of a thousand files and hammers; the swan and cypress trees a thousand miles away from our thoughts, the red forge-fires burning. No, we shall never forget Kellner's.

* * *

All things come to him who waits. They told us we would probably start Sunday morning. They told us we would be sure to start Sunday afternoon. They told us to be ready without fail Monday morning. They promised there would be no disappointment Tuesday morning. It wasn't their fault, but by Tuesday afternoon we decided that maybe we would never get away, and stopped giving each other farewell dinners. Wednesday morning, May 24, we started. We could not really believe it; but it was true. We shook hands with everybody and were photographed by everybody who had a camera, and started in convoy for the military camp at Versailles. Lieutenant Commandant Charles Paroissien headed the procession, and Chief of Section Mason brought up the rear.

We arrived at Versailles without incident and were packed, along with hundreds of other convoys, under the trees on the main avenue facing the palace entrance. Each man stood at attention beside his car while the line was inspected, and afterwards we left our cars and stood in military line with other troops for a second personal inspection. The inspecting officers seemed pleased, and we caught a whispered word to the effect that we appeared to be the kind of men who could be counted on to *"conduire très serieusement."* Iasigi and Girdwood were singled out for special attention because of their service medals from the Ambulance, and were commended for coming back to France to enter the service a second time.

We had been told that we would probably leave Versailles the same day, but in the light of the unavoidable repeated delays at Paris it is not strange that we had a thrill of surprise when the announcement came after luncheon that we had been assigned to the military park at Chalons-sur-Marne, and were to proceed there at once.

And so our first real convoy journey began, to the accompaniment of a heavy, driving rain. In the first car rode Lieutenant Commandant Paroissien, with his French chauffeur, Thibaud, and his secretary Yves Moreau, who bears the title of "Maréchal du Logis"; two other French soldiers are permanently attached to the convoy; Brigadier Boncharel, orderly to the Commandant, and Trooper Salaude, the cook (it is rather a pity that he cannot drop the "u" and make himself into Salade, for the only thing we lack to complete our gas-

tronomic content is something fresh and green). After the pilot car the twenty ambulances followed, with Keogh as file-leader for the first ten and Dodge file-leader for the second ten. Charlie Faulkner, who knows more about cars than any other half dozen men in the section, tailed the procession with his *"camionette,"* while Section-Chief Mason, driving the staff car, held a tentative position in the rear, whizzing to the front of the convoy when necessary and scouting back and forward as occasion arose. Through the driving rain we went for several hours, the only stops being for one or two punctures.

We were travelling nearly due east, entering the Valley of the Marne by way of the high road to Provins, where we were to spend the night, and traversing one of the great agricultural sections of modern France. For the first afternoon's run we were not in the military zone proper and saw few convoys or soldiers, but what we did see impressed us more profoundly with the strength of France than any military spectacle could have done. Every inch of ground as far as the eye could reach for miles and miles of plains and gently rolling country was under cultivation, the intensive cultivation which only a few farming sections in America can show; green fields of wheat and grain, fruit trees in flower, farm houses in perfect order, huge barns and granaries bulging with last year's yields; signs of plenty at the present moments, and assurance of rich harvests for the coming fall. It is true that there were not so many men in the fields as in normal times, but old men, boys, and women were working everywhere, and we were told that at planting

time and harvest men are always sent back in sufficient numbers, easily spared from the front, to help in the farm work.

On we went for miles and miles, along splendid roads, lined on each side by double rows of shady trees, sometimes through green wheatfields shot with flaming red poppies, then entering forests and emerging again after a few miles into the cultivated fields.

Late in the afternoon the rain passed and the sun appeared. Punctures were infrequent, stops were few. Village after village loomed in sight and then disappeared behind us, the streets always filled with children waving and shouting welcome and farewell—until at length, toward twilight, the cathedral-crowned hill of Provins came into sight.

There we entered the military zone and slept for the first time on straw pallets in a *caserne,* rolled in the blankets provided for us before we started, and which we keep as our personal property while we are at the front. The beds were hard, but sleep was sweet.

Thursday morning, May 25, we were up and away on the road to Chalon, entering further into the Valley of the Marne, travelling the very road on which German Uhlan raiders had entered France, to be driven back in the great battle that saved Paris and stopped the German advance in the early months of the war.

Soon we began to see wooden crosses dotting the field by the roadside, sometimes a single grave, sometimes a cluster, sometimes a field full of them. Each cross is made from an upright piece of pine sapling about five feet high, with a cross piece of the same wood about

three feet in length, the bark still on them, and the name, when there is a name, inscribed on a small plank nailed to the centre. Some of the crosses stood over barren mounds, some were covered with flowers, but beneath them all, marked or nameless, lie men who died to save France. May their sleep, too, be sweet.

* * *

It was near noon of the same day that we entered the outskirts of Chalon and stopped in a suburb, between high, dust-covered walls, while the commandant and section chief scouted into the city to make arrangements. In half an hour they came back with bread, canned meat, and wine, announcing that we were to have lunch on our cars and then proceed to the barracks. By this time friendly crowds had gathered around us in the street, and a dear little old lady, with white hair and rosy cheeks, came out of her house on the corner to give us all black coffee.

An hour later we entered the gates of an immense triangular *caserne* with hundreds of other cars parked in the drill-ground, and became a part of the French army. Straw mattresses were given us, each man shouldering his mattress and carrying it to a second-story room in one of the old wings of the *caserne* which had once been occupied by Napoleon's men, and the Russians of the present war had left their record on the walls, the soldiers of the Little Corporal leaving painted inscriptions of their victories, and the Russians decorating the plaster walls with cartoons and silhouettes of camp and barracks life. It developed toward 2 a.m. that former tenants of the sleeping quarters had left other and more

intimately personal souvenirs, and before the night was fully over half of our section, led by Chief Mason in person, covered from head to foot with bites, figured in our first and what we hope will be our only retreat. They spent the rest of the night in their cars, itching and scratching and waiting for the dawn.

* * *

On Friday, May 26, just forty-eight hours after leaving Paris, we arrived, after an eventful run of twenty kilometres from Chalon, at Mourmelon le Grand, a village situated in the plains of Champagne, about twenty-five kilometres southeast of Rheims, and about nine kilometres behind the trenches. This is to be our headquarters as long as the Sixth Army Corps, of which we are a part, remains in this sector.

Just outside the village is a long avenue, lined on each side with one-story brick and stone buildings, constructed especially to house the soldiers, and in two of these structures we have our offices, dining room, and sleeping quarters. Our sleeping room is a long, hall-like room with plaster walls, high ceiling, and concrete floor. It was absolutely bare when we entered it. We have made beds by elevating stretchers a foot or two from the floor on wooden supports, and have driven nails and old bayonets into the wall on which to hang our clothing and roosacks. Old benches and old pieces of matting we have appropriated until the place is reasonably comfortable. Our cars are parked in a line at right-angles to the avenue, backed against one of the buildings.

Mourmelon le Grand is in itself an uninteresting village. Built in the plain, its houses are ugly, uniform,

plastered affairs, laid out with the mathematical regularity of a Kansas prairie town; there is no chateau, no buildings or ruins of mediæval times, and the church is devoid of architectural or artistic significance.

But all that Mourmelon may lack in intrinsic interest is more than made up for by proximity to the front. We hear the big guns booming, and on a quiet night can even distinguish the popping of the machine-guns and the rifles. Observation balloons are close by, and nearly every day the German Fokkers circle over our heads, apparently more bent on observation than on throwing bombs. The anti-aircraft guns hidden in every direction in the fields always open up on them, and it is a beautiful sight to see the flash of fire and puff of white smoke as the shrapnel shells explode at the rate of sometimes a dozen a minute in the air more or less near the aviator.

Sometimes they come to drop bombs, and on those occasions every man is ordered to hide in the bomb-proofs, or at least get within doors or under trees where he can't be seen. When the aeroplanes first came the soldiers and civilians alike, instead of being afraid, used to crowd into the streets and open fields to see the sight, and now, to keep the Germans from spotting garrisoned villages as well as to protect life, the general staff has issued an order punishing with fifteen days in jail any person in Mourmelon who is so careless as to let himself be hit by an aeroplane bomb.

On Friday night, the first night of our stay here, the Germans tried to take a small position in the little woods near St. Hilaire named "Y Greque," and for a short time there was heavy artillery firing from the French

guns. As darkness came on we not only heard the booming of shells and the rattle of machine-guns but saw the whole sky in the direction of the lines illumined by the flares and rockets. The French flares go high, are fairly bright, and last a comparatively long time, while the German flares go not quite so high, flare noticeably brighter than the French, and go out much more quickly. It was to the tune of this bombardment that we turned in for our first night's sleep at the front.

During our first day at Mourmelon, Friday, May 26, none of the men went out on duty. Section-Chief Mason and Lieutenant Commandant Paroissien made a trip to the front to inspect the *postes de secours* we were to handle, to look over the roads, and to make the acquaintance of the *"Médicin divisionaire."*

* * *

On Saturday, May 27, Section 8 received its baptism of fire.

Three cars were called to St. Hilaire, our evacuation post eight kilometres from Mourmelon and about two and a half kilometres behind the first-line trenches. Dodge, Seabrook, and Shattuck drove, and with them went Iasigi, Davison, and Section-Chief Mason.

St. Hilaire, a village which has changed hands several times and now finds itself in front of the French batteries in easy sight and range of the German guns on the slopes opposite, is what the poilus call a *"mauvais coin."*

It is a mass of ruins, but evidently was once a charming spot, and the approach by the road from Mourmelon is still beautiful, though the fields on both sides of the

route are scarred with bomb-craters and honeycombed with abandoned trenches. For practically the entire distance the road is protected from German observation by a screen formed of pine limbs and small pine saplings strung on wires and rising well over the top of the tallest auto truck.

This road is in easy distance for the German artillery, but there is only one point which they have been shelling during the past month, to wit, the abandoned farm of St. Hilaire, three kilometres back from the village and now nothing more than an abandoned mass of crumbled masonry. However, no shells fell as we passed the farm, and in another five minutes we turned a curve and caught our first sight of a French village totally destroyed by heavy-artillery fire. The approach is through a grove, over a lovely little stream with a picturesque mill at the left, and one emerges rather sharply from the trees into full view of the town. To one who had never before seen the effect of heavy high-explosive shells the scene was appalling. Some among us had seen big floods, fires, tornados and railroad wrecks, but there is no form of devastation on earth that can compare to a town deliberately and completely wrecked by continuous artillery fire. On one side of the street the houses were blown into shapeless masses; the stone was not only scattered, but often crumbled into dust; the iron was tortured into fantastic shapes; the woodwork was ashes; on the opposite side were wrecks of houses with one wall or one triangular corner standing; others had holes blown through them big enough for a two-horse team to drive in, yet still upright; here

and there a single house had escaped destruction, but served only to emphasize the devastation around it; the roof of the church is gone, one half of the nave and entire transept is crushed in, and the tower is tottering; it was as if the huge hand of some demon from the clouds had lifted the entire village to unthinkable heights and in wanton rage dashed it back to earth.

These impressions crowded on us in the instant that we were traversing the village to reach the entrance to the trenches and bombproof shelters in which the evacuation *poste* is located. The entrance is immediately beside the road, emerging from the village behind a half-destroyed house that furnishes shelter from Bosche binoculars if not from their big guns. The sergeant on duty was standing in the road at the entrance to his dug-out, smoking a pipe, and half a dozen of his stretcher-bearers were sitting around under the trees. There had been little if any firing that morning.

They told us they had several *"blessés"* (even the Americans and English call them that in France) to be transported back to the hospital near Mourmelon, and we made ready to load them into Dodge's car.

While we were still talking a German shell, and then another, and still another, screamed high over our heads and exploded somewhere in the woods behind St. Hilaire. In another instant the French batteries located a few hundred yards behind us opened up a terrific bombardment, while more German guns joined in the duel.

The fire was not directed at St. Hilaire. The enemy was firing just over our heads to the woods 300 and 400 yards behind us, "feeling" for the batteries they knew were masked among the trees.

"They are not firing at us," explained the sergeant, "but a shell timed a fraction of a second early, or fired a fraction of a centimetre lower, might land here by accident, so we had better get our *blessés* loaded and away."

The few more minutes we remained, however, were ample to furnish experiences we shall never forget. Scarcely had the sergeant ceased speaking when a German shell fell far short of its mark and short of us, too, in the field beyond St. Hilaire; another broke to the right a hundred yards or so above our heads, and a third and fourth broke so close that the fragments sprayed the road where we were standing. One of our party picked up a jagged piece still sizzling hot from the explosion. Then the Bosche gunners readjusted their range, and the shells began to break again, as they intended, in the woods behind.

Descriptions of how one feels under shell fire are always inadequate and malapropos, because every man feels differently. Close observation of the men of our section on this and subsequent occasions seems to show that they are alike in only one respect—they all hold their ground. For instance, there is one of us, a man of unquestioned courage, who "ducks" his head and shoulders every time a shell screams over his head; it seems to be an involuntary muscular reaction. Another becomes garrulous, laughing loud and keeping up a rapid fire of jokes, possibly like the negro who whistles as he traverses a graveyard. Another man in the section turns quite pale, yet keeps his hand and voice as steady and his eye as clear as one of Napoleon's grenadiers.

It may possibly all be summed up in the comment

often made in other wars that a man who is not afraid of a big shell is simply a fool, and that courage consists not in foolhardy nonchalance, but in standing your ground and doing your duty.

The noise of an artillery duel has been described by thousands of writers, yet it comes as a surprise to each man who hears it for the first time. The crashing reports of the French soixante-quinze, the roar of the bigger guns, the sharp crack of the small shells, and the muffled boom of the exploding bombs—all these can easily be reproduced in the imagination, by simply multiplying the din of any practice cannonading you may have happened to hear at close range in time of peace. But what nobody can describe is the shrieking and screaming of the shells as they fly through the air over your head before bursting. It cannot be described, because there is no sound with which it can be compared. It is a sound which has no place in things human—a shrieking, crescendo scream from the shells that are arriving—the last diminishing wail of a lost soul from the shells as they depart—all mingled at times in an ear-splitting, high-keyed symphony of hell in which the bursting bombs and rumbling guns furnish the deep bass tones.

Well, after all, they weren't firing directly at us, and we all got back to Mourmelon.

* * *

But for some of us the day had only begun.

On beyond St. Hilaire, two kilometres further in the barren land between the batteries and the first line infantry trenches, deep in the bowels of the earth is the furthest *poste de secours,* St. Souplet. From that lonely

shelter the French *"brancardiers"* wind their way through the labyrinth that leads to the line and bring back the wounded on stretchers. It was from this post that there came a call in the late afternoon.

Keogh was sent with his car, and riding with him were sent Thomas and Seabrook.

The cannonading had ceased as they went through St. Hilaire, and only an occasional far-distant shot broke the silence as they left the ruins behind and entered the barren fields. All was dead level except the screen at the left of the road. The fields were bare and stony, pock-marked with shell-craters, seamed with connecting ditches to and from the trenches. The grass was sear and withered from continued gas attacks, yet here and there a flame-red poppy survived—*"les fleurs des tranchees,"* which many a soldier has sent back from the brink of death to the wife or sweetheart who is still waiting for the letter which will never come.

Two kilometres of flatness and desolation, and a small, painted board stuck a couple of feet out of a trench entrance informed us that we had arrived.

We left the car in the road behind the screen, possibly seventy-five yards from the entrance to the *poste,* which is in the field to the right.

Thomas and Seabrook went to the *poste,* while Keogh remained at his car to do a moment's work on the engine. All was quiet, and the *brancardiers,* emerged from the trenches, were smoking their pipes and watching the sun set behind the German lines, plainly visible on the hills beyond.

It turned out that there were more *blessés* than one

car could carry; but some of them could sit up, and it was decided to crowd as many of them on the car as possible, leaving Seabrook at the *poste* until another car could be sent out.

One of the more badly wounded men was carried to the car, and the others were to walk to it. The brancardiers were short of stretchers and asked Seabrook to go and help Keogh open the two stretchers which were folded in the car.

As Keogh and Seabrook were unloading the stretchers to open them on the ground a German "77" broke in the field to the right, more than two hundred yards distant. It seemed to be a stray shell from out of the silence, dropped there by hazard. But in an instant another dropped within a hundred yards, and then they began to come thick and fast.

They were shelling the *poste*.

One of the stretchers was jammed and wouldn't open. The shells were exploding in the air and on the ground from thirty to fifty feet from the car and the fragments were whizzing in all directions. The two men were crouching flat on the ground, still working with the stretcher, and finally got it opened and in place. They yelled back to the *poste,* and two stretcher-bearers started to the car carrying those who were the most seriously wounded. They seemed a long time getting there. Thomas, who was aiding the other wounded to walk from the trench to the car, says that when a shell broke over the stretcher-bearers' heads they dropped the stretcher to the ground and ran back to the shelter of the trench, leaving the wounded man for a moment, but returning

to him a moment afterward and carrying him to the car.

The car was loaded and got away safely, with Keogh driving, Thomas on the seat with him, and Seabrook going back across the field to the post to wait for the next car as had been previously arranged.

The shelling continued, and all the remaining men entered the bomb-proof dug-out, which a "77" shell couldn't have penetrated even if it had landed squarely on top.

It was then about 6.30 p.m.

For an hour the shells continued to come, breaking over and around the *poste*, raining many splinters and small fragments near the dug-out entrance.

About dark the firing ceased.

Five minutes afterward the French green flares went up, announcing a German gas attack.

It turned out that the gas was from asphyxiating bombs, but the men were compelled to keep their masks on for about an hour. The gas was not very heavy, and every little while a brancardier would loosen his mask, put his nose at the door for an instant and then quickly readjust his mask again.

"Ca pique encore," he would whisper, and all would settle down to another fifteen minutes' waiting in the stuffy gloom of the underground cave.

Finally the man at the door lifted his mask a little, then tore it from his face with a sigh of relief and exclaimed, *"Ca ne pique plus."*

In the meantime the shelling had been resumed, but was intermittent and seemed to be directed further

toward the right, though occasional shells still fell near the *poste.*

In addition to the *blessés* already in need of attention, other brancardiers brought in an artilleryman who had been struck squarely in the face with a piece of shell casing, and was in a frightful condition. He had a chance to live, they said, if he were taken to the hospital in time.

By that time it was nearly ten o'clock.

The expected second car had not come—blocked, it turned out afterward, by a combination of engine trouble and a misunderstanding about where it was needed. The 'phone wires were down.

Seabrook went to awaken the sergeant of the *poste,* who was in another dug-out a hundred yards away, and asked if it would be best to go back on foot to St. Hilaire to get an ambulance.

"If you are willing, I will give you a hand-cart and a brancardier to help you, and you can take the wounded man in the cart to St. Hilaire, where you will probably find one of your cars stationed," responded the sous-officier, "and that will be quicker."

So they swung the wounded artilleryman on his stretcher between the two wheels of the "*poussette,*" or hand-cart, and, with three other wounded men staggering behind, started in melancholy procession on foot for St. Hilaire.

Flares and rockets were still illuminating the sky along the trenches behind; a slight stench of gas was still in the air. Sometimes the road was in darkness, sometimes lighted by the glare. Occasionally shells shrieked overhead.

The three wounded men fell behind, too weak to keep pace with the cart, and often it had to stop and wait for them to catch up.

The wounded artilleryman could neither speak nor see, but was conscious and could understand what was said to him. The road was rough, and his moans were piteous; when the cart stopped for a moment, he seemed to be pleading for something, but there was nothing to do but go on.

At St. Hilaire they found Rogers on duty with his car, and the four wounded men were transported back to the hospital, with the artilleryman still alive.

* * *

Calm follows storm on an artillery front, and on one of the quiet mornings an officer consented to show us the batteries in the woods behind the evacuation post. Though many of the guns were quite close by they were so skilfully screened by trees and brush-heaps, that we could never have found them without a guide.

Birds were singing, the trees were glistening from a flurry of rain; the sun was again breaking through the leaves around the silent monsters of destruction that yesterday had been.

We surprised the lieutenant of the nearest battery, engaged, like Candide, in cultivating his garden. He had cleared a tiny spot, a few yards wide, facing the entrance to his bombproof dug-out, and had planted lettuce and radishes, with rows of flowers between the vegetable beds. He had even built a little wooden bench where he could sit and smoke his pipe and dream of his real vegetable garden in Provence—for he was a son of the Midi.

One of his men was darning socks; another was mending a shirt; a boy, who looked scarcely more than twenty, was amusing himself tossing chunks of bread to a puppy; others were reading books or laughing over last week's funny papers from Paris.

"So you find an opportunity to enjoy life even here," one of us said to a grizzled veteran, and, with a smile that was half sigh, he responded:

"Mais il le faut. On est tué si vite."

Returning to the dug-out at the evacuation post, two of us were invited to remain for luncheon, a *"dejeuner dans les tranchees."* The dining room, a cave six feet under ground, presented a strange combination of luxury and dirt. On the wall hung a stained Louis Quinze mirror in a tarnished gold frame; a tapestried arm-chair, mud-stained and with one leg replaced by a pine board, was at the head of a plank table blackened with grease and smoke. There was a bottle of champagne, but the cups and plates were of battered tin. The place was lighted by a four-wicked gasoline lamp suspended from the ceiling. It looked like a relic of the Roman catacombs, but, as a matter of fact, had been ingeniously made by inserting four German rifle-cartridge shells horizontally into the sides of a small tin bucket which had contained marmalade. One of us carries the lamp back to America as a gift-souvenir.

The attention of our host was somewhat divided between us and a cat who was nursing her kittens on the straw in a corner. The tiniest kitten, christened "Microbe," was brought to the table and introduced to the visitors.

"The old cat is a wise one," they told us, "and knows every ruse of the trenches. You will see her on the roof in the sunshine after dinner. She only blinks her eyes for our soixante-quinze shells no matter how hot and fast they are flying—she knows the sound—but when the Bosches begin to reply she is back underground quicker than any of us."

"They do not often send anything bigger than the '150' high explosives in our direction," continued the speaker, "but let me show you where we all go on the few occasions when the marmites are dropping."

"Marmite" is the name they reserve for the huge Krupp shells, the "Jack Johnsons" that make a hole in the ground as big as a two-story house.

They led us by a winding underground passage to an inky-black cave, the roof of which had thirty feet of solid virgin earth between it and daylight. We were groping along the wall while the sous-officier was feeling for his matches, when an agonized screech rent the darkness. Our guide gave vent to a frightened grunt and leaped back as if bitten by a snake. He had planted his foot squarely in the stomach of a sleeping stretcher-bearer.

"*Diantre!* I thought I had received a marmite in the belly," he grumbled, and rolled over to sleep again.

* * *

On May 30 and 31, the sky overcast with clouds, and rains frequent, they began to move the Sixth Army Corps (of which we are a part) away from the Mourmelon sector, replacing it with fresh troops who came tramping and rolling through the village by the thousands, on foot and in auto trucks, while the men and machine-

guns of our corps departed, mud-stained and weary, for eight days of repose in villages behind the lines, preparatory to being sent—to Verdun some say, to La Somme say others.

We expected our section to be moved on the morning of June 1, but on the afternoon of May 31 the sun came out, the sky cleared, a number of Bosche planes flew over Mourmelon and got safely back to their lines—and from our general staff came word that no more troops could move by daylight. Soon after, a formal order came to our section instructing us to leave Mourmelon at 2 a.m. and repair to the stable and backyard of the Widow Cueux, in the village of La Veuve, where we had been billeted.

We filed out of Mourmelon in the darkness, running without lights, but by two-thirty the dawn was red (so much further north is France than our United States), and it was broad daylight at 3 a.m. when we reached La Veuve, turned down a narrow side street, found the Widow Cueux's, parked our cars under the sycamore trees in a yard that extends into the open fields, and had our breakfast of black coffee, army bread, cheese and marmalade, after which we rolled into our cars, wrapped in blankets, to nap until lunch-time.

* * *

June 2. It is not because we are tired, but simply because we belong to the Sixth Army Corps that we find ourselves *"en repos."* We are now an integral part of the corps, and where it goes we go. In the meantime, La Veuve is not such a bad place for a prolonged picnic.

It is true that the village is squalid; it is also true

that the mayor had to order the removal of huge quantities of stable manure from the Widow Cueux's premises before its barndoors opened to receive us; it is true that a score of our own huskiest lads had to work with shovel and wheelbarrow to make the yard habitable—but the squalor of La Veuve has its picturesque qualities; the green fields are beyond, and even barnyard smells, when mingled with the fresh sweetness of field flowers and grass, have certain rustic charm, as Virgil said in his Bucolics, reminiscent of childhood summers long ago.

The sound of guns is faint and far away. The old widow sits at her door and watches us pitch our awnings and build our rough benches and tables under the trees. She went through similar experiences under these same trees during the Franco-Prussian war, nearly half a century ago, and takes our presence philosophically, as long as we let her eggs and chickens alone.

None of us had cared to bunk in the barn. We sleep in our ambulances, on stretchers covered by blankets.

The *poilus* of the Sixth Corps, after months in the trenches, are spending eight days of repose, billeted here in La Veuve and in neighboring villages and farmhouses. They are revelling in the running water, green grass, wild flowers, shade and sunshine, denied them so long. Their greatest pleasure is to lie in groups in the grass on some hillside, recalling dangers past and victories won. Hearing them talk, we learn more than in any other way, for they have been through experiences that make our exciting times seem tame enough.

This morning they introduced us to the corporal who has "sixteen bullets in his blanket, but not a scratch on his skin."

He proudly exhibited the blanket, and told us how the *poilus,* when all patent armor devices and bullet-proof jackets had failed to deflect the German rifle fire, had themselves invented, or rather discovered, the one known buffer that no rifle bullet can pierce.

They take their own heavy sleeping blankets, soak them in water, and then roll two or three of them in a tight wad, sometimes putting their knapsack in the centre of the roll to make it thicker. Crawling along on their bellies, pushing the wad of blankets foot by foot in front of them, it affords just enough cover to protect them from horizontal rifle fire.

The high-velocity bullets, which neither wood nor steel can turn, sink into the soft, soggy, woolen roll and die there, harmless as eggs in a nest.

Many another trick the *poilus* have learned to save their skins, but none so efficient as the roll of wet blankets.

* * *

Conversation with the private soldiers here furnishes convincing evidence that the Germans lost more than they gained when they resorted to the deadly gas attacks and liquid fire. In the earlier stages of the war, the French peasant Pierre had a sort of good-natured, scornful sympathy for the German peasant Fritz, and occasional true stories filtered from the front of exchanges of friendly words and tobacco between the opposing first-line trenches. At that period, the appeal of "Camarade" stopped many a French bayonet as it was about to sink into a German breast. But that period has passed. It ended with the gas attacks.

"Plus de camarades" is an expression we hear everywhere, and the word Bosche, expressive merely of contempt, has given place to *"les vaches"* or *"les sales vaches,"* which means "cows" in the dictionary, but "dirty beasts" in the argot of the trenches.

Today each French poilu is fighting his own war, fighting with a bitter hatred; fighting to kill.

* * *

Section 8 wants a dog—a police dog if we can get him, but any dog will do. Every company in *"repos"* around us has its canine mascot who shared their life in the trenches and whom they regard as their comrade-in-arms.

A lieutenant of infantry quartered near us has a collie which survived a gas attack in a remarkable way the week before we arrived at St. Hilaire.

"The gas attack came very suddenly, as it often does," said the officer, "and some of our men who were not quick enough in adjusting their masks are now dying in the hospital. I was lucky enough to get mine on quickly, and for little Pom, *pauvre chien,* there was no mask. I tried to wrap his head in my overcoat, but he struggled out of my arms and, with the instinct which the *bon Dieu* gives animals, buried his nose deep in the mud. We watched his scratching with his little paws and pushing his muzzle deeper, while we wondered if it was any use. And that is how he is still with us, taking his repose and enjoying his nap in the grass. *Viens,* Pom. You see, monsieur, how well he carries himself; only he still coughs a little—curse the dirty German beasts!"

* * *

In all the stories of the trenches we hear this same inextinguishable hatred of the enemy. If it be true, as some tactician has said, that one must hate to fight effectively, the individual French soldier has become the most dangerous fighting machine in history. It is not merely a matter of charging valiantly under orders and carrying trenches when ordered to do so; it has become a personal matter with the *poilus;* each individual is out to kill. There has been no brutality on the part of the French toward German prisoners or German wounded—but beyond that there is no mercy.

A certain lieutenant of infantry named E— R— told us the following characteristic incident of a sector where gas and liquid fire had been employed with cruel effect.

"I was making my round of inspection on the first line, Sunday morning two weeks ago. You will recall there was no fighting on that day. It was good to be alive. Birds were singing, the sun was shining, the muguet was blooming in the very shell-craters. Church-bells were ringing in a distant village.

"I had just entered a lookout post in the first-line trenches when the man at the peep-hole turned and whispered to his comrades:

"'Shh, *voila un Boche.*'

"'Where?'

"There he was in the German parapet, scarcely fifty yards away, his head and shoulders in full view—a good-looking peasant boy, with ruddy complexion, curly light hair and blue eyes. He had forgotten war. He was not even looking in our direction. His half-turned face was transfigured by the peace and beauty of the sun-lit fields

and he was breathing deep of the morning air. His body was swaying slightly and he seemed to be humming some folk-song of *outre*-Rhine.

"But while I was looking the *poilus* had sent for Pecou, who climbed heavily but silently to the observation-post at my side. Pecou is a huge peasant from Normandie, slow of speech, with enormous hands and little eyes the color of steel.

" 'Where is he?' whispers Pecou.

" 'Straight before you,' answers a comrade behind him.

"Pecou does not respond, he merely reaches backward with his huge hand and someone passes him a loaded rifle.

"The rifle cracks.

" 'Kamarad, Kapout,' grunts Pecou, and placidly descends.

"Eh, bien, my friends from America, there are four million Pecous in France. These are not the same men who swapped tobacco for sausages between battles two years ago. Perhaps you will not understand Pecou, but perhaps you have never seen a comrade dying with his lungs full of gas."

* * *

June 10. Our ten days in La Veuve, with the soldiers of our division quartered here and in neighboring villages, have given us a splendid opportunity to take stock of ourselves and also to learn something of the men with whom we will be associated for the next few months. We are the official ambulance section of the Twelfth Division of the Sixth Corps of the Fourth Army.

Our division is composed of four regiments of about 3,000 each, totalling in all some 12,000 men. We are as much a part of the division as if we were all born Frenchmen. Our rations are furnished by the army; we are under army regulations; billeted in our sleeping quarters by the army; each of us receives five sous per day, the regular pay of the *poilu,* and each of us receives his army ration of pipe tobacco every ten days.

Back in Paris the American Ambulance furnishes us a list of the things we are expected to take with us in the field, the list which has been published in America. It includes warm clothing, underwear, felt slippers, socks, shaving materials, and other personal paraphernalia—a good, practical list of useful and necessary things. Before we left Paris, the field section office added to it, rolls of blankets, mess-kits, cantines—but the *tout ensemble* of our equipment when we left Paris would have been as appropriate for a hard auto-camping trip across the American continent in time of peace as it is for our present purposes here.

On the first day of our arrival at the front, the army, however, added two items for each of us, more important than all the rest, viz.:

One regulation steel helmet.

One regulation gas mask.

So here we are, *poilus* and comrades like the rest, by these two tokens, and by the aluminum numbered identification tag which we wear on a chain around our wrist.

Like the rest, but luckier than the rest—for the American Ambulance seems followed always by a lucky star. On yesterday we learned that two days after we

left Mourmelon, a German aeroplane bomb fell beside the *caserne* where we had been parked, wounding five of the French Ambulance drivers in the section which had taken our place.

* * *

Our Twelfth Division has a new commander, General Giraudon, who was presented in a formal review on Wednesday, June 7, held in a vast field three kilometres north of the village—a spectacle which differed in no particular from any banal military pageant at home, except as we remembered what these had gone through and what they would have to face again. The regiment which we have learned to know best is the 67th, as it is quartered in La Veuve. It has been one of the hardest hit by the war; thirty thousand men have passed through it during the past sixteen months. As they marched by in closed ranks, with band playing and colors flying, we could recognize many faces of new-made friends. How many of them, we wonder, will be left *la-bas* in the next attack; how many will be brought back bleeding and broken in our *"belles petites voitures,"* which they have gathered around so often in the evening to admire.

We were merely spectators in the review. An hour later the General left his limousine, left his prancing steed as well, left his general staff, and came down the alley on foot through the mud to our barnyard, accompanied only by an orderly, to "review" his new *"section sanitaire."*

As we are all under military regulations, we scarcely dared to blink an eyelid as we stood stiffly beside our cars on his arrival.

The General walked along the line and stopped before Boyd. We had been given our instructions to stand at attention and not salute while under inspection, so Boyd stood like a statue, until it became unmistakably evident that the General intended speaking to him. Boyd's hand then started toward his cap in a salute that was never finished. Those of us up the line never will know exactly what happened in that embarrassing half-second, but an instant later the General and Boyd were shaking hands in good American fashion, while words escaped Boyd's lips which sounded suspiciously like "How are you?"

The ice was broken, and when the General left he told us he was proud to have an American section in his division.

Our only duties while *en repos* at La Veuve have been to transport occasional sick men in the division from their temporary barracks or from our field hospital to other hospitals in the neighborhood. The only excitement we have had since leaving Mourmelon was the trip Keogh, Forbush, Iasigi, McKee, and Crocker made with their cars to La Suippe, carrying division officers to the school there where they are being taught to fly carrier-pigeons. The pigeons are used when telephone wires are down. It happened that the Germans decided to bombard Suippe that morning, and our men, who stationed their cars on a hill about a kilometre from the town, witnessed the remarkable spectacle of bombs bursting among the buildings, and houses in flames.

Most of our time here, however, has been spent off duty, exchanging visits and souvenirs with the *poilus* of

the 67th. They bring us mementoes of the trenches, brass and aluminum time-fuses from the German shells, cigar-lighters made from flare cartridges, occasionally a button or cantine or hat-band stamped with the Hohenzollern eagles. Often they entertain us with wrestling and boxing matches and association-football games in the field facing our cars, and one evening we paired off a number of matches with the gloves among the men of our section, to the great delight of the Frenchmen.

Our *poilu* friends have been very much taken with the American songs, and every evening they gather in a ring before the cars to hear Armour, Jacobs, and the other musical members of the section singing to the accompaniment of mandolin and guitars. One night they decided it would be appropriate for them to exchange courtesies, and they invited the section to the sleeping-quarters of one of the companies in a neighboring barn, where wine and cakes were served *al fresco* in the straw.

While ninety per cent of the French troops are made up of simple-minded peasant farmers and workmen, we are also making the acquaintance of many men of different type among them.

Davison recently "discovered" among the stretcher-bearers a well-known Parisian painter, Cardinal-Kolsky, who has had more than one canvas in the Salon, and who has kept his brushes and tubes with him in the trenches for the past fourteen months. He painted a portrait of Davison, seated in the twilight in front of a barn door, and, on finding it greatly appreciated and admired by us all, has had the kindness to paint similar portraits for other members of the section.

Poets, painters, sculptors, musicians—the flower of France—they are all, or nearly all, fighting side by side with their horny-handed brothers from factory and farm.

Priests there are, too, in abundance, the *"aumoniers,"* or fighting priests, with crucifix in one hand and rifle in the other, many of them decorated with the Croix de Guerre and Medaille Militaire. One of them, with the mud of the trenches still thick on his hobnailed boots, celebrated military mass on Sunday morning in the little church of La Veuve, praying for comrades left behind in the last attack, reading the special litany addressed to the God of Battles, *"Deus in bello fortis."*

The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, the doorway was thronged, and men were kneeling on the steps and in the street. It is said, on good authority, that the war has brought more Frenchmen back to the simple, trusting Catholic faith of their fathers than any influence in the past hundred years.

* * *

Dame Rumor whispers that we are to be on the move within a day or two. The soldiers have a picturesque expression to the effect that they have heard this or that "down the chimney pipe," the *"tuyau,"* a phrase corresponding to our American expression, "A little bird told me." The *"tuyau"* says we are going either into La Somme, near Arras, or to Verdun. But no one knows, and no one will know, until we get our marching orders.

Eh, bien, the whisper in the chimney-pipe has changed to the sound of rolling wheels and bugle calls. We are going "the Verdun way." This very night we watched

our 67th Regiment tramping out of the village in the darkness and rain, "hep, hep, hep," and we are to follow with the dawn.

* * *

Brabant le Roi, June 12.—Fifty kilometres we came in cold and rain, in chilling and unbelievable June weather, and here we are, quartered for three days in a huge stock-farm barn, with Verdun fifty-five kilometres further north, and the Revigny railroad head two kilometres south, in sight among the trees.

We are still too far away to hear the guns. The cackling of barnyard fowl, the lowing cows, and whinnying horses would make war seem far away, were it not for the fact that our barnyard door opens directly on the main highway to Verdun. They pass in an unbroken procession, night and day—the marching troops, the black soup-kitchens, the *soixante-quinze* batteries, the machine-guns on muleback, the horse and motor ambulances, the huge transport trucks carrying thirty men each—reminding us that over the hills beyond the waving wheat fields is being waged the greatest battle in the history of the world.

"And you others?" ask the marching *poilus* as they wave a passing salutation.

"Yes," we answer, with a new feeling of comradeship as we look into their serious faces.

"We too are going *la-bas.*"

* * *

June 13. Still at Brabant le Roi. While waiting for orders to move we are having leisure to explore this neighborhood, which the Germans passed through during

the battle of the Marne. Nearly every village was shelled or burned, or both, but the extent of the destruction varies, and in the majority of the towns strange contrasts are presented, many buildings, and even entire streets are still intact and inhabited, while other whole sections of the same village are in ruins.

Revigny, distant only ten minutes' walk through the wheatfields, is a typical example. On entering the town from the north you see no marks of war. The houses are standing, the streets are full of children, even the lace curtains are still in the tidy windows, and commerce goes on; but walking a hundred paces further and turning to the left you enter another quarter where the desolation is complete. For entire blocks, every house is crumbled and charred. The cathedral presents a tragic spectacle; the tower is half shot away and tottering. The façade is mutilated by shells. Great holes in the walls have been filled up by temporary carpentry, and though the interior is partly burned the people of the town still worship among the charred benches. On approaching the façade from the square one is struck by the fact that, while tower and massive pillars have been crushed, a delicately executed porcelain statuette of the Virgin in a pale blue robe remains with its serene beauty untouched in the niche above the door.

Inside the cathedral, above the arch of the left transept, hangs what the flames left of a huge wooden crucifix. The cross is blackened, and of the carved wood figure of the Christ nothing remains but a mutilated forearm and the charred feet, still held in place by the heavy nails.

It is always the church that suffers, sometimes, as the French insist is the case, through the sheer wantonness of the invaders, but oftener, we are tempted to believe, because its thick walls make it the strongest fortified place in a village, and its tower furnishes a valuable post of observation.

It was in a ruined church at Vaubecourt that we next encountered our friend, Cardinal-Kolsky, the artist stretcher-bearer who painted our portraits at La Veuve. He was seated on a pile of stones amid the ruins, sketching what was left of the walls, with three great bells, half buried in the grass, in the foreground. While we watched him at his fascinating work, a priest told us the story of Vaubecourt's destruction.

It was while the Germans were sweeping forward, with the French in retreat. A private of the French infantry, wounded in the thigh, overlooked by the *brancardiers* and unable to follow his retreating comrades, went into the church and dragged himself up in the belfry to hide from the Germans who were taking possession of the village. Later they found him there, lying in his blood, beneath the bells (the same bells that are now half buried in the grass). They dragged him down from the belfry, and though he was almost dead from loss of blood and scarcely conscious, they propped him against a tree and shot him as a spy, pretending that he had been sent into the belfry to observe their movements and signal the French artillery. Assuming the same motive, they hanged the *curé* as an accomplice, burned the church, killed the mayor, and set fire to the village—all because a wounded *poilu* had happened to choose the belfry as a hiding place.

Only after the war is ended will the world know how many nameless little French towns suffered a like fate.

* * *

It was among the ruins of one of these little villages in the Marne that Charlie Faulkner encountered and made friends with a fluffy-haired puppy of mongrel breed in which the setter seemed to predominate, and straightway adopted him as the mascot of Section 8.

After the puppy was washed and as many of the fleas removed from his hide as possible, the problem of a name presented itself. We learned that wine instead of water is used at a French christening, and the circumstance gave someone the inspiration to suggest the name "Pinard" which is wartime slang for the common red wine furnished the men in the trenches. So, while one of us held the struggling infant, another poured a cantine of the sour red liquid over his head, and the christening took place; the soldiers found both the dog and the name so droll that Pinard was destined to become not only the mascot of our American section but the joke and the pet of the whole division.

Apropos of the name, we have learned that the French of the trenches is not the French of the dictionary. They have slang or "argot" expressions for everything. For wine, they have three or four slang words of which the two most usual are *"pinard"* and *"pive."* Brandy, or *eau de vie,* is known as *"la gniole."* To eat, which is *manger* in regular French, is *"bouffer"* in slang. To run away, which in Paris would be *se sauver,* becomes *"se trisser"* in the trenches, while to be killed, in trench argot is *"zigouille."* An automobile or *voiture* becomes a *"bagn-*

iolle." A cook or *cuisinier* becomes a *"cuistot"* and beef or *boeuf* becomes *"singe,"* which literally means monkey.

Some of the boys of our section who are not very strong on French, have anglicized Pinard's name and call him "Peanut."

* * *

Village of Dugny, June 21. Four kilometres behind the city of Verdun.

We have been here with our division in active service since June 18. We will remain here for perhaps a fortnight longer, when we will be sent back into *repos* and replaced by a new division. Three weeks is about the limit of human endurance. For four nerve-racking days and nights our little cars have been climbing to the citadel of Verdun, turning to the right and going into the hills among the batteries and bursting shells, to a *poste de secours* in the Fort of Tavannes less than two kilometres behind Vaux and the first-line trenches. The road by which we pass is shelled day and night. Ambulance drivers have been killed and wounded in the sections which preceded us. We have seen men mangled by shells bursting a few yards in front of us while we have escaped. We have driven our cars over the bodies of dying horses. Three of our cars have been pierced by shrapnel and shell fragments. Yet not a man among us has been touched. Lack of sleep, the continued noise of artillery, bad drinking water and the attendant dysentery have put our nerves on edge, but we are doing the work and the one thought in the minds of all of us, when we are not too worn out to think at all, is that, come what may, we are going to stick it out.

It is hard to write about—this Verdun service. Those of us who used to laugh at danger have stopped laughing. Those of us who used to turn pale have got the same set look about the jaws and eyes as the rest, but they no longer change color. We don't come back any longer and tell each other with excited interest how close this or that shell burst to our car—it is sufficient that we come back.

* * *

We were two days coming here from Brabant le Roi. The sun was shining, after fifteen days of rain, and happily has continued to shine. The first day, we reached Erize la Petite and spent the night there. On the morning of June 18 we made the 27 kilometres from that point to Dugny, without incident, except that we saw more cannon and marching soldiers and auto trucks and convoys than we had ever dreamed of in our lives before, two steady streams, pouring in and out of the crater of fire and death toward which we were travelling. Arriving at Dugny we found quarters in a hayloft, so small and narrow that we have to walk about on our own beds to move from one side of the place to the other. We find one big advantage in being in Dugny, to wit, that the Germans are not shelling the village proper, but are only occasionally dropping bombs around the railroad station, which is outside the town and fully half a kilometre from where we are quartered. Our cars are parked in the crowded village street, while our kitchen and dining tent have been installed in a nearby field.

As soon as we had unpacked, a dozen of us were detailed to go up to Tavannes, riding on the cars of the

departing French ambulance section, to learn the roads. Verdun, as everybody knows, is protected by a circling range of hills forming a marvellous natural defense, and on these hills at salient points are located the outer forts. Our service carries us to the northeastern section of this circle, which touches the German lines at Vaux. Dugny is in a valley. Immediately on rising to the first small hilltop going out of Dugny the city of Verdun looms into view, so close that the sheer walls of the citadel and the two square towers of the cathedral are distinctly visible. We go due north toward Verdun, crossing the River Meuse, which flows behind it, skirting the city limits on the right, descending a sharp hill in the shadow of one of the forts of the city proper—the first spot where we come under direct shell fire—and then we turn sharply to the northeast, traversing the ruined suburb called Faubourg Pavé. Emerging from the Faubourg Pavé the road enters a valley and then begins to climb in a northeasterly direction toward Fort Tavannes, which is the highest point on the horizon. To the right of the road as we mount are the big French guns, which fire over our heads. French *soixante-quinze* batteries are mounted for several kilometres so close to the road along which we pass that at that place shells pass only a few feet over our heads. Some of the cannon muzzles project within fifteen yards of our cars. When they go off they seem to be shooting into our faces. We mount gradually into the hills toward Fort Tavannes and, reaching a hillcrest, turn from the main northeast road, directly north along a narrow artillery road which runs two or three kilometres through a shell-swept wood to

the huge fort. These last two kilometres are the most dangerous. The *poste de secours* is in the subterranean shell-proof caves of the fort, and our cars enter the shelter of one of the tunnels in the fort, remaining in this shelter while they are being loaded. Then we swing through the open courtyard of the fort, emerging from another gate and retracing the road back to Dugny. The *evacuation poste* where we bring the wounded is in the church here.

Words cannot describe the desolation of the woods around Tavannes. The tree trunks are bare and often shattered. Foliage and smaller limbs have all been shot away. The ground in every direction as far as the eye can reach is furrowed and torn. The few houses we pass are masses of crumbled stone. The road itself is little more than a succession of shell holes that are made during the night and filled up with crushed stone during the day while the firing is not so heavy. Dead horses and mules lie and rot by the roadside where they fell. Here and there are wrecks of ambulances and motor-cars, torn by shell fragments, sprayed with shrapnel. To the right and left haggard men dart like rabbits in and out of invisible *boyaus,* or conducting trenches, through which they pass to and from the fighting line. The front-line trenches are in earshot over in the next valley, and the German artillery is on the next northerly range of hills. The German observation balloons, or *saucisses,* can see our little cars as they climb for the last five hundred metres toward the shelter of the fort, but whether their guns are firing directly and intentionally on us or whether it is all simply the systematic bombardment of the fort and road we will probably never know.

All the above general features of the landscape we became acquainted with in broad daylight when we went up on the French cars. Our first actual service to the fort, however, was destined to occur by night—a night which never had a parallel in any of our lives before.

The hundred and sixty *brancardiers,* or stretcher-bearers, of our section had to be transported from Houdainville, near Dugny, to Fort Tavannes, and the duty fell to us. Each car made about four trips by night during a period of thirty-six hours. It was emergency work, performed during the hours when ambulances were not supposed to be on the road, on account of the heavy *ravitaillement* traffic, the artillery convoys and long lines of troops going to and from the trenches. Fully half the distance had to be made in low speed, crowded on all sides at certain points by heavy trucks and artillery. The Germans were bombarding because they knew it was the hour of heavy movement along the roads. The French were replying over our heads to protect the convoys. As some of us started back down the long hill from Tavannes on our first trip, red and green flares were sent up from Vaux, the signal of an attack and the request for a *"tir de barage,"* or curtain of fire, from our closest *soixante-quinze* batteries. For fully a kilometre the whole roadside at our left descending, burst into a mass of flame from the muzzles of the guns. A gun was stationed every twenty yards, and each gun was firing from twelve to eighteen times per minute. The noise was horrible and the guns were so close that the concussion made the whole earth tremble. We knew that all the shells were clearing our heads.

Our intelligence told us that we were in no danger from our own guns, but an involuntary instinct stronger than intelligence made us crouch low over our steering-wheels.

Some of us remember, silhouetted black against the flame, in all the hurly-burly confusion of the rushing autos and convoys, the figure of a tall, gaunt trooper, pipe in mouth, on a horse rawboned and tall like himself, erect and calm in the saddle, his shoulders squared and his head thrown back as if in revery. And when some of us, struck by his attitude, lifted our faces toward the sky, we saw the stars still gleaming far above the fire-swept Verdun hills.

And there was another horseman on the road that night whom two of us will remember when the more huge and spectacular aspects of the battle of Verdun have been dimmed by time. It was on the second trip that night when we were descending the wooded hill near the Porte St. Victor at the right of Verdun. We were blocked behind a slow-moving artillery battalion, while at our left a wagon convoy was mounting. Suddenly there was a grating of wheels, a shrill sound of whistles, sharp and distinct amid the thundering guns, and all was confusion. A shell had crashed into a tree at the left of the road and exploded on contact, some fifty feet ahead of us. The tree had crashed across the road, wrecking a caisson, while a big shell fragment had struck the rider of the wheel horse full in the chest. He lay beside the road, mangled as if he had been in a railroad wreck, but still conscious. More horrible than the blood, more horrible than the gaping wound, were the unnatural sounds he uttered—the wordless, primordial

cry of a stricken animal in which there was nothing left of human.

* * *

On such a road it was inevitable that some of our cars and some of our men would be touched. We were at it night and day without respite. Three of our twenty cars were *"en panne,"* and the other seventeen were doing the work supposed normally to be done by two sections totalling forty cars. It meant that each car had to make from five to seven trips per days, so that some of our machines were on the road every instant. It was during this time of stress that we evacuated five hundred and forty wounded from Tavannes Fort to Dugny, a distance of fifteen kilometres each way, in twenty-four hours, making the record of the war for that particular *poste*. On the night of June 19 Davison answered a midnight Tavannes call and had his car pierced through and through with shell fragments as he was entering the fort. The following morning, between four and five a.m., as Seabrook was leaving the fort with a load of wounded, his car was struck in the same way. Both Davison and Seabrook were untouched, but one of the wounded men in the latter's car was hit in the side by a small fragment. The same day Lieutenant Paroissien had a narrow escape at Bar-le-Duc, when a piece of an aeroplane bomb struck him in the chest, but lodged among the papers of a heavy leather pocket-book. In the afternoon, Rogers, lying on the grass near our dining tent, received a slight surface wound in the leg from a stray piece of shell.

* * *

On the morning of the 20th, the entrance tunnel at the Fort of Tavannes was caved in by German "380" high-explosive shells. Rogers, Faulkner, Boyd, and MacMonagle were in the fort at the time, and escaped with their lives by a miracle. They were felled to the ground by the concussion; the windows of the cars and even part of the woodwork were shattered by the shock, while wounded men and stretcher-bearers within only a few yards of them were buried under the debris during the bombardment.

The place was no longer tenable as a *poste de secours,* as the Germans had the exact range, with their observation balloons in full sight, and they were dropping high-explosive shells at will on the fort and on the road entering it. So the *poste de secours* was abandoned and re-established in a ruined house known as the Cabaret Rouge, three kilometres back on the road, among the French batteries.

About one time each night one of our cars still ventures on an emergency call to the mass of ruins which was Tavannes, but we do not make it any longer as a regular *poste.* And while we were not afraid to go, we are glad, for the underground, vaulted tunnels of that fort composed a chamber of horrors which we remember in our dreams. The floors were mud, the ceiling slimy, dripping stone. The light was scant, the wounded were so numerous that we had to step over their prostrate bodies. The stench was terrible.

* * *

So, on June 24, the Cabaret Rouge became our regular *poste de secours.* The picturesque name of the place

has a diabolical fitness. Victor Hugo might have named it in a moment when his genius was at its height. It is bizarre, dramatic, romanesque.

You are asleep in the straw, perhaps dreaming of home. Toward midnight you are awakened by a hand on your shoulder, and a whispered voice says: "We are going to the Cabaret tonight—the Cabaret Rouge."

If hell has its theatres and cabarets, the devil will do well to pattern his entertainments from the spectacle we see nightly at this one. The house is halfway up the slope in a valley. Behind it, in front of it, on all sides of it are the French batteries. The German shells are bursting in the fields around, while our own guns flash and thunder incessantly. Immediately in front of us, above the hilltop a couple of kilometres distant, the red signal rockets illumine the sky, varied occasionally by a white rocket demanding a curtain fire or concentrated artillery bombardment at a certain point in the trenches; sometimes a green flare warning us of a gas attack. Down from the trenches, along the winding *boyaus,* come the stretcher-bearers with their crimson burdens. They are deposited on the straw, re-bandaged, given a drink of water or cold tea, and loaded into our cars—sometimes groaning, sometimes shrieking, sometimes silent. The wall of the house, with a shell-hole through it big enough for five men to stand in, looms dirty red amid the flashes of artillery. Red Cabaret, red rockets, red fire, red blood.

* * *

And they keep shelling the road. On the night of the 23d, Charlie Faulkner, volunteering to drive a car,

had the metal part of the searchlight (which we are not allowed to use) smashed by a shell. On the night of the 24th, Keogh, the laughing, brave-hearted boy we love perhaps most of all, came walking back with his arm streaming blood. He had been hit less than a kilometre up the road from Dugny. He had tried to steer his car with one hand, but ditched it on the roadside and managed to get back on foot. How glad we all were to find that by a lucky chance the fragments had missed the bone and that the wound was not dangerous. He was bandaged and sent back to the hospital at Neuilly, the hero of the hour.

On the night of the 25th Seabrook broke an axle within a hundred yards of Cabaret, and found himself stuck in the zone of a gas attack. The Germans were sending asphyxiating and chrymogen bombs, and inside of an hour many of the men at the *poste* were dropping unconscious despite the protection of their masks. Faulkner, accompanied by Ivrou, the French mechanic, went to find out what had become of the missing man. Coming unexpectedly into the gas zone Faulkner found that Ivrou had started without a mask. He gave his gas mask to Ivrou and continued to Cabaret, where they arrived just as Seabrook, in a half-fainting condition, was being put into a wagon. They transferred him to their car, and got back safely.

Our men luckily felt no bad after-effects, but for the next twenty-four hours the Dugny hospital was full of gas victims, many of whom died.

* * *

On June 25 a French ambulance section arrived in

Dugny to share the work with us, reducing the amount of our labor more nearly to normal. Three days later, on June 28, the French section was replaced by Section 1 of our own American Field Ambulance, so that we now have two sections, parked side by side here, with forty cars doing the work that we originally had to do with seventeen cars.

During this same period we have temporarily lost the following men: Keogh, wounded; Thomas, ill; Crocker, ill. All three are at the hospital in Neuilly, and we look forward to their return.

Girdwood and McKee left the section soon after our arrival at Verdun and will not return.

New men in the section, in the order of their arrival, are MacMonagle, Read, Lumsden, Harper, and Shoninger. MacMonagle came in time to share the first hardships, the others after we had been relieved of the double work.

Since we left La Veuve, our French contingent had been increased by the presence of M. Roger, a charming gentleman who has succeeded M. Moreau as *maréchal du logis* and aide to the lieutenant commandant. M. Moreau, however, also remains with us.

* * *

On June 27 Charlie Faulkner saved a French soldier from drowning in the swift current of the Meuse, where we often go to swim.

The drowning man had entered the river at a point some hundred yards above where the Americans were swimming. At least a score of men were closer to him when he began to scream and throw up his arms, but they merely gathered on the bank as he was carried past

and shouted advice to him. Faulkner went in and got him, having to swim against the current and go twice to the bottom before he finally reappeared with his burden. The river was filled with reeds except in the main current, and, making his way to the supporting reeds, Faulkner shouted for aid, as there was some dangerous water still to traverse before reaching solid ground. By that time some of the other men were in the water helping, with onlookers still gestulating on the bank. Finally they decided to aid, and while one of their number unwound a long sash from around his stomach, another, clinging to the end of the sash, waded out about to the depth of his waist and managed to help establish connection with the bank.

The Frenchmen were filled with gratitude and admiration. "We can't swim like Americans," was one of their repeated comments.

Faulkner, after doing a really heroic thing in the water, made a sort of "motion-picture" hero out of himself on land, leaping on a bareback horse and galloping across the marshes to Dugny for a doctor and an ambulance. Soon the little Ford came tearing out the road in best three-reel-thriller style with Faulkner on the seat.

We all began laughing, and wondered if he had the horse inside.

* * *

Decidedly, we are going into the artillery if the United States is ever unfortunate enough to be at war. The infantry soldier of the first line is going through a hell every day and every minute, compared to which the lot of our friends the artillerymen is a mild sort of purgatory.

There is a *soixante-quinze* battery in a wheatfield near a point where we often stop. When the Germans are not shelling them too hard they sit around in the sunshine, and pick flowers, and take photographs, and invite us to have coffee with them.

Every little while their lieutenant emerges from a dug-out which is connected by telephone with the first-line observation posts, and orders them to place so many shells at a certain spot on the map, so many metres distant. Each *soixante-quinze* is capable, when necessary, of firing twenty times per minute, so that it is an affair of less than five minutes for a battery of four guns, working only at moderate speed, to deliver a hundred shells as per order.

Sometimes they are cracking away all the time; on other occasions they are idle for hours.

The artillerymen get their meals regularly; they get their mail every day; occasionally a German shell falls true and they get killed. But when they are not getting killed they are quite comfortable—and we have learned that there are a good many things in war worse than getting killed.

Decidedly, if we ever have to fight, we are going to join the artillery.

* * *

The chief medical officers of the division tell us that our little cars are doing great work. We are glad, for we have been doing the best we can, and, without knowing it, it seems that we have established some new records in this sector.

Official records of our "best day," June 22, show that

in twenty-four hours we transported 555 wounded from Tavannes and Cabaret to Dugny, an average distance per round trip of twenty-five kilometres. One of our men was ill, so that the work was done by nineteen cars, the total nineteen making an aggregate distance of 1339 kilometres loaded, and 1359 kilometres empty, or an average of about 142 kilometres per car. Practically all the work was done under shell fire. Armour made the best individual record, totalling four trips to Tavannes and five to Cabaret, carrying a total of 51 wounded.

During the above twenty-four hours, five of our cars were struck and pierced by shrapnel or shell-casings, yet not one of our drivers was wounded.

* * *

While we were doing our humble but necessary part behind the trenches, the men of our division were winning glory and making history. They went up twelve thousand and came back seven thousand, having sustained more than forty per cent loss in killed, wounded, and gas illness; but they did their work. One company went up 130 men, and came back seven.

But the French now have a double consolation—the assurance of ultimate victory, and the absolute, definite knowledge that the German losses in front of Verdun are appallingly greater than their own.

On the Fourth of July a courier brought us a gracefully worded order from the general staff to the effect that because of America's national holiday fifty per cent of all Americans on the fighting-line were granted a special forty-eight hours' leave—provided the exigencies of their individual units permitted them to get away.

Our work here had been growing lighter for several days, and it was decided to let half our men go to Paris.

They were taken in auto to a railroad station fifty kilometres back, where they took the train.

When they returned, laden with chocolate, pastry, and fruit, Lieutenant Paroissien met them at the train with a surprise. During their absence Section 8 had left Dugny and had gone in convoy to Ancerville, a lovely village near the border of the departments of the Haute-Marne and Meuse, fully eighty kilometres behind the lines, out of sound of the guns, and in a section of the country on which the Germans had never set foot.

It was there that we spent a week, out of sight of ruins, out of sound of war, among civilian population, dear old women of the best French peasant type, the streets swarming with children, the old men cultivating the fields, the entire life of the little town going on. The only evidence of war was the presence everywhere of our soldiers, billeted in the barns and houses wherever there was room to sleep.

Ancerville is a rather large, prosperous, country town, and those of us who wished were permitted to rent rooms in the private houses and enjoy the unaccustomed luxury of a bed with sheets and pillows.

On Sunday afternoon the band to the 106th Regiment assembled in the public square for a concert. Musicians exercise the duties of stretcher-bearers at the front, and of the thirty whom we had heard play in La Veuve, twelve were missing, seven of them killed and the other five wounded. They played music from Massenet's "Manon" and a part of Tchaikowsky's "Symphonie Pa-

thetique." Such strange contrasts does this war offer! Last week, the horror of exploding shells mingled with the screams and groans of wounded and dying; this week, charming music, laughing children, green trees, brooks, fountains, singing birds, old women in white caps seated peacefully in their doorways shelling peas.

While in Ancerville the great French fête day, the Fourteenth of July, arrived, marking the fall of the Bastille and the birth of Liberty. We joined heart and soul with our friends of the division in celebrating it. Against a hillside, in a grove outside the village, a stage was erected, and a carefully rehearsed vaudeville performance was presented to an audience composed of most of the division and most of the village—an audience in which men just out of the trenches sat with children in their laps, beside admiring country girls and motherly old peasant women—an audience that overflowed the space provided for it and climbed into the trees on the hillside.

The programme was in charge of the 106th Regiment, and consisted of everything from classic music by conservatory graduates to low comedy by Montmartre clowns. The American Ambulance was featured on the programme as the *"grande attraction,"* and consisted of mandolin and guitar music by Armour and Jacobs, followed by a boxing bout between Jacobs and MacMonagle, and another bout between Buffum and Armour. The applause was generous and sincere.

Jacobs also figured on the programme as piano accompanist for a wonderful violinist, and their splendid work was, from a serious standpoint, the best feature of the programme.

As an integral part of the French army, our section was furnished with special rations, including champagne and cigars, for the *quatorze Juillet* dinner, and that night there was a torchlight procession through the village, in which our boys carried lanterns, marching and singing side by side and arm in arm with the *poilus*.

But, alas! immediately on the heels of this happy day came to our section the first two real chagrins and occasions for regret we have had since we took the field. The first was the news that we were to be separated from our division, perhaps permanently, and the second, the illness of our Commandant and friend, Lieutenant Paroissien, which we trust will not be serious, but which has laid him in a military hospital in a neighboring town.

Shortly after midnight, the morning of July 17, we were ordered to leave at dawn. We were to go back to Dugny, leaving the division behind, and, after three or four hours of fast work, we got everything loaded, and filed out of the town. Early as it was, scores of our personal friends in the division came to bid us goodbye. We were awfully sorry to leave them, and are still hoping that the exigencies of war will enable us to rejoin them later, or enable them to rejoin us.

After an easy and uneventful run we arrived in Dugny, and lined our cars up in the old familiar way in the centre of the town near the church-hospital. Our quarters are less than one hundred yards from those we had before, and somewhat more comfortable. Our work is to be the same—in fact, we hadn't been in the town five minutes when an orderly came with his little square scrap of paper: "Two cars quick to the Cabaret Rouge."

So history repeats itself.

* * *

The people of Dugny, including the few civilians left, remember us and seem glad to see us again—especially the little woman who still makes *"Café chaud à toute heure."* We brought her a dozen glasses, which she needed, and some shirts for her little boy, from Paris.

But it was the Germans who really gave us the warmest welcome back to Dugny.

The very evening of our arrival, as we were seated under the tent at supper, there was a whizz and shriek over our heads, and a "130" shell, the first to ever fall actually in the streets of the town, exploded fifty yards from our quarters, wrecking four French automobiles. We finished our dinner, and then measured off the distance. It was exactly fifty paces from where our cars are parked.

The following morning, July 19, there was consternation in the section. Pinard was missing. He came on Armour's car from Ancerville to Dugny, and had been seen frolicking around the street just prior to the time the shell broke, but he hadn't been seen since, and now there was no trace of him.

We didn't seriously believe he had been struck by the shell, but he had nevertheless completely disappeared. It was only by good luck that we ever found him again. Armour and M. Roger found it necessary to return to Ancerville for a day, and there, exhausted and asleep in the straw of the deserted house where we had slept, they found Pinard, lonely, miserable, lost.

Triumphantly they brought him back, and there was

joy at his return. Whether he was carried back on a passing *camion,* or whether he started due south when the shell burst and never stopped running until he reached Ancerville, is a matter of conjecture.

* * *

Dugny, Verdun Front, July 25.—The *poste de secours* at Cabaret Rouge, which we are serving again as in the latter part of June, has changed in many aspects during our absence. The Cabaret sector, which our "Fighting Twelfth" occupied when we were here before, is now held by a division of African colonials, in which negroes and Arabs predominate. Their uniforms are of khaki, like our own, and their steel helmets, when they have helmets, are khaki-colored too, but everywhere except in the first line they prefer to wear their tall red caps, which are like the traditional fez, but minus the black tassel. They are great fighters and have done some wonderful hand-to-hand work around Fleury and the Tavannes tunnel.

Most of the Arab and black colonials are Mahometans, and insist on praying at mysterious hours regardless of where they are or what they happen to be doing. One of our drivers descending from Cabaret at dawn yesterday with a load of wounded, heard a great commotion behind him in the car, and on stopping found that a wounded Arab had crawled out of his stretcher and was kneeling with his feet unconsciously protruding across the face of a Frenchman, praying at a great rate in a strange tongue, with the car jolting over the shell holes.

Another peculiarity of some of our colored allies are that they are not particular at all times about having

their meat cooked. One morning recently a crowd of them just back from the trenches, and ravenously hungry, grabbed chunks of bloody, raw beef from the hands of their cook as he was conveying it to the kettle, and ate it with keen relish, while French *poilus* hurried from all directions to witness the strange sight.

The troops in our sector are now taking many German prisoners, and frequently they stop at Cabaret, a hundred at a time, under guard, to rest and get water, on their march back to the interior. They are mostly simple, haggard peasants, intensely human, and intensely grateful for a little kindness—and even the French soldiers who have suffered most terribly seem to realize instinctively that the terrible indictment of barbarity which the world has brought against Prussianism and the Hohenzollern military principles in this war, cannot be justly laid to the door of these simple Bavarian farmers who have fallen into their hands. It is true, nevertheless, that the French hate with a bitter hatred all Germans in the trenches, but when poor Fritz is wounded, worn out, thirsty, and a prisoner, he becomes a different person. We have seen French soldiers, themselves as weary and in need of refreshment as their prisoners, carrying water to Fritz and holding his bandaged head while the cup is put to his lips before they themselves have had water.

The negro troops cannot comprehend this spirit. When a detachment of German prisoners arrives, they surround them with laughs and taunts and jeers, and frequently even dance in their glee. When the French guards are not watching too closely they will draw their

knives and bayonets, and slily approaching a German, will go through all the pantomime motions of running him through the body, or cutting his throat, usually laughing meanwhile, and breaking into shouts of joy if the prisoner shows fear.

We are all avid for German souvenirs, and so are the *poilus*. The moment prisoners arrive there is a good-natured onslaught with scissors and pocket knives, in which we are allowed to join, and soon Fritz finds himself divested of all the brass buttons from his sleeves and coat-tails. Fritz, besides, is usually perfectly willing, and often amused at the operations, particularly as it seems to be an unwritten rule to always leave him the front buttons, which actually keep his coat in place. Some of the buttons are very beautiful, with the Prussian eagles, or the Bavarian lion. It is an amusing sight indeed to see a patient German, standing quietly and doubtless wondering what will happen next, with three or four poilus, and possibly an American ambulance driver, clinging to his coat-tail, and cursing the stout thread, which, like everything else German, is strong to resist attack.

Sometimes they are willing to let us take their little red-banded vizerless caps (spiked helmets are almost a thing of the past) provided we give them some kind of head-covering in exchange, but we have never seen an American, or Frenchman either, take a cap from a German without asking it and unless the owner was willing.

* * *

The bombardment of the roads in the neighborhood of Cabaret is not nearly so severe as it was in June, and

frequently now we are able to sit on the crest of some nearby hill in comparative safety and watch the work of our batteries, at the same time getting an unobstructed view of the occasional German shells which still drop around us seeking out the French guns and ammunition convoys, but usually in vain. An hour of such observation is calculated to make a man wonder whether blind chance rules the universe, or whether a special Personal Providence ordains every hit and miss. We see, for instance, a certain unprotected stretch of road between hills a few hundred yards from where we sit. We see four German shells land squarely on the road at a certain spot, at exact intervals of three minutes. Then we discern a wagon train moving up toward that spot in the road. The drivers cannot see, as we can, just where the shells are hitting. We take out our watches and figure that unless they stop, the next shell will be timed to get them. The three minutes elapse. The wagon train is immediately over the shell-craters. The German shell, exactly to the second, whizzes over our heads. There is a breathless fraction of a second, while we strain our eyes, and the shell breaks at an entirely new point, two hundred yards short of the road. Lucky wagon train.

A queer story came to us a couple of nights ago about a German wireless message, said to have been picked up by a French station over on the other side of Verdun near Mort Homme. Rumor said the message was from German general staff, announcing that an American ambulance unit had been seen by German aviators, working the Cabaret Rouge poste, and instructing the German gunners not to fire on Cabaret.

We began to imagine the fantastic story might be true, as it so happened that few shells had fallen close to Cabaret during the past forty-eight hours. But just as we were beginning to give serious credence to the rumor, word came that fifteen men had been killed and fifty wounded by shells within a few paces of the post. A few hours afterwards, while Iasigi's car was standing in front of Cabaret, a German "77" landed within five paces of it, luckily doing no damage. No wonder we are now laughing at our own credulity.

* * *

The wagons, guns, trucks and other vehicles which pass Cabaret on the way toward the lines, where they are often in direct line of vision from the German observation points, have adopted a wonderful, highly fantastic system of protective coloring. If the scientist who wrote about the tiger's stripes invisible in the canebreak and the green lizard blended in the grass, could have seen one of these convoys, he could have added an interesting chapter to his book.

The biggest canvas-topped camions or trucks are usually painted to represent an old stone wall, or a pile of earth and stones. The stones are painted different shades of neutral gray, while even the irregular lines representing the mortar or cement are skilfully painted in a way calculated to deceive even the observer with high-powered binoculars. Cannon carriages, and even the barrels of the guns, are often painted dull brown and green splotched on the blend with foliage. Some of the huge wagons are covered with cane or tree branches, and masquerade, like the army in Macbeth, as a moving

forest. All white horses are stained pale reddish brown and dirty green, like a poorly-done mottled Easter egg.

Apropos of horses, some of our men were remarking the other day upon the curious appearance of the French horse-collars, which usually have two immense horns or prongs sticking high in the air above the neck, and one of the alleged wits of the section suggested that the purpose might be to make the German aviators think the horses were cows!

* * *

Dugny, July 27.—When the bombardment of our road through the woods just outside Verdun became too heavy, we now take another route, entering the Porte St. Victor and traversing the city itself, emerging later from a second gate and thence through the Faubourg Pavé to Cabaret Rouge. We also receive occasional special calls to a hospital in Verdun, and consequently have had rare opportunity to see the deserted city, long since abandoned by all civilians and inhabited now only by a few soldiers, military guards, and wolfish dogs.

The city retains its rugged mediaeval grandeur in spite of, or rather perhaps enhanced by, the ravages of the enemy's artillery. In one quarter, including the central business district, all the buildings are in ruins, while in other quarters whole streets are practically intact, with only here and there a single house caved in by a chance shell.

Verdun, a compact city of normally perhaps 20,000 inhabitants, crowns a hill rising from the Meuse, and is still surrounded by its old walls. The cathedral, with its two square towers, still stands at the highest point, and

may be seen for miles around. Its windows are all shattered, and many surrounding smaller buildings have been wrecked, but only two shells have actually struck the church, and from a distance it still appears untouched.

On entering the ruined part of the city, one is reminded of Pompeii, not merely because of the terrible loneliness and silence, but from the mute evidences on every hand of the sudden and unprepared flight of the population. In some of the stores on the main business street the whole front of the buildings has been sheered away, yet inside, among the fallen fragments, fragile goods are still seen exposed on counters as if for sale. In a café, the billiard balls and cues are still in their racks on the wall, though a shell which came through the opposite wall has destroyed the tables. In a drug-store there are shelves, along which tiny piles of shattered glass at regular intervals show where the bottles used to stand. In a millinery window, delicate be-flowered and be-ribboned hats, like dust-covered flowers on their slender stem-like pedestals, stand untouched within a few feet of huge walls which have crashed to earth. In a second-story room of a dwelling house which has been half shot away, a candle-stub with its blackened wick still stands before the shattered mirror on the mantel, and the bed-covering still lies as it was thrown back in haste by the departing owner. Despite the silence, despite the desolation, it is almost impossible to believe that these people have been gone for months. Intimate signs of life are everywhere, though life itself has departed.

* * *

Though the work here as a whole is not as dangerous as in June, some of the men have had some rather nar-

row escapes since we returned. Gartz had a piece of shell through the top of his car yesterday, and Keogh was missed less than two feet by a fragment that struck the seat beside him. Keogh had another narrow escape a day or two ago at Cabaret, when a brancardier with whom he was in conversation was wounded by shrapnel, while numbers of shells apparently intended for us have fallen dangerously close to our cars on the Route d'Etain beyond Bellevue farm, in the Tavannes neighborhood.

The Route d'Etain call, which can only be made at night because it is closer to the lines and in direct view of the Germans, is perhaps the most dangerous we are now making. We usually send two cars there between darkness and dawn, and the realness of the danger is emphasized by the fact that we are continually warned not to smoke cigarettes beyond Bellevue farm on account of the danger of the tiny red glow being seen, and not to speak in loud tones for fear of being heard in the mysterious silences which sometimes occur even in the heaviest bombardment.

Our duty is to wait with our cars at a certain point in the road until the stretcher-bearers bring the wounded from a shelter one and a half kilometres further on, carrying them that distance on their shoulders, but occasionally some of us have volunteered to leave our cars and go with the stretcher-bearers on foot when they needed a helping hand. On such trips, there are usually four bearers to each wounded man, and the stretcher is hoisted on our shoulders. It is on these rare walks, with no noise or distraction from an automobile, that we are best able to hear and see the more intimate sounds and

flashes from the trenches. Here for the first time we have heard rifle bullets singing; have seen the trench rockets go up so close that they seem to be almost over our heads; and have heard the shrapnel breaking at close range.

It is in this general zone that the black soup-kitchens on wheels are brought, with their already steaming cauldrons of potage and coffee; and they are met by the poilus who scurry up through the connecting trenches, with their buckets and canteens to carry food back to their comrades. The soup-kitchen work is extremely dangerous, for if a rocket happens to show one of them on the road the Germans will sacrifice more ammunition on it than they would be willing to use to destroy a whole company of men. Next to actually holding the trenches, the keenest struggle on both sides is to get food into the first lines and to prevent the enemy from doing so. When we are close to the front we have learned from experience that it is safer to be near a battery than near a "*cuisine roulante*," as they call them.

* * *

The real hero of Verdun and of the war is the *poilu*, or infantry soldier, of the first-line trenches. The destiny of France is in his keeping. The immortal slogan, "*Vous ne passerez pas*," was coined in the trenches, and the triumphant, "*On les aura*," which has replaced it in these latter days, was likewise born of the *poilu*.

The man in the trenches is the essential factor. The rest of us back here among the batteries and observation points and *postes de secours* are engaged solely in

the work of backing up his efforts. Whether generals, artillerymen, stretcher-bearers, or ambulance drivers, we are here only to protect and serve the man out yonder—preparing the way before him with shell and shrapnel when he advances—transporting him back, covered with blood and mud and glory, when his work is done.

History will tell what the holding of Verdun means for civilization and what it has cost France; but only those of us who have been here will ever know what it has meant for the individual soldier. They are not merely dying for their country. They are enduring things beyond the limit of human endurance, and still living. Where all semblance of trenches and shelter have been destroyed, the line is still firm. Where fortifications of earth and stone have not availed, flesh and blood have held fast.

One of the men in the ranks of our division, Joseph Bonvin we will call him, has told us something of what Verdun meant to him, and his experience multiplied by twelve thousand is what it meant to our division. His story is worth telling, because it is typical.

When we first made his acquaintance he was lying under a tree at La Veuve, inhaling the perfume of a rose, watching the summer twilight deepen over the wheat-fields, speculating in undertones with his comrades on whether the division would be sent to Verdun or La Somme. We all knew pretty well it would be one or the other, for the Twelfth is one of the great "fighting divisions" of the Sixth Corps, and is technically known as a *"division d'attaque."* Joseph guessed it would be Verdun, and one night soon afterward the Verdun call

came. Aroused at midnight by the bugles, with his twelve thousand comrades, Joseph marched out of Le Veuve at 1 a.m. in the darkness and rain, "pan, pan, pan," through the mud, his back bent beneath rifle, mess-kit, knapsack, blanket-roll, cantines, cartridge-belt, weighing in all some 45 pounds. Some of us shook hands with him as he filed past the church corner, and we wished his load could have been lighter.

He marched till dawn, and about sunrise arrived at the railroad station of H—, where they loaded him, with some of his comrades, into a box-car marked in white letters, "8 chevaux, 40 hommes" (eight horses, forty men), and he sank down into the straw and went to sleep. All night long and until noon the train rumbled, for such trains move slowly, and finally they arrived at the Revigny railroad head. A breakfast of hot coffee, cheese, and hard army bread, and a crowded barn to sleep the rest of the day in (for new troops moving toward Verdun are "fed up" on sleep, seeing that they will not get much after they arrive), and Joseph is loaded into another box-car to be transported to the village of X—, only six kilometres behind Verdun, where the division stops a day to get itself together for the night march up through the hills and down into the trenches.

So it comes about that the next night, as our little Red-Cross cars mount the Verdun hill among the convoys and amid the dust, we overtake and pass Joseph and his comrades trudging along toward the battle-front, from which they know many of their number will not return. Despite that realization, which shows plainly

enough in their faces, they find courage to recognize us and shout a passing greeting.

"Remember, I am billeted for a return ride in the *belle petite voiture,*" cries Joseph, and though he was speaking in fun his wish later came true.

At Cabaret Rouge we saw the last of them—for a time. Having reached this point by the same road over which the ambulances, ammunition-convoys, and *ravitaillement* travel, they turned sharply to the left and disappeared into the seven-foot-deep *boyaus,* or connecting-trenches, which form the protected path for men afoot in the dangerous zone between the *poste de secours* and the first-line trenches.

By way of explanation it may be well to note that the so-much-talked-of "first, second, and third-line trenches" are more theoretical than real on a battle-front like the Verdun sector. There are trenches everywhere for a depth of four or five miles behind the fighting front, except where they have been destroyed by shell fire, but the trenches behind the first line are for communication and to fall back on. It is only in the first line that the infantrymen fight. In a sector bombarded like Verdun the real battlefront consists of that first line, whether it is holding out in trenches, shell-holes, or forts, and behind it the artillery. The space between the lines and batteries is where the American Ambulance works; but it is only on rare occasions that any of us go closer than within two kilometres of the first line. Ordinarily, we load our cars with wounded who have been brought on stretchers through the boyous to Cabaret, but occasionally special calls come asking that a single car be sent

to a certain more advanced spot on a certain road, and it is these calls that are most dangerous, as sometimes we get in direct line of vision with the German artillery observation posts. Sometimes on such trips we find the wounded men on stretchers in a ditch by the road with a stretcher-bearer keeping guard over them, but frequently it also happens that we have to hunt for the wounded men ourselves and find them lying helpless by the roadside unattended by anyone. These are the most dangerous and at the same time the most interesting calls, especially at night, as the red and green rockets look very near, and amid the occasional lulls in the artillery fire we can distinctly hear the rattle of the machine-guns and the popping of the rifles. So accustomed are our ears to the louder noise of the cannon, that the rifle shots seem low-toned and muffled like the sound of an army of woodpeckers tapping on telegraph poles. The machine-guns sound like packages of small firecrackers touched off under a tin pail.

* * *

The roads to such advanced points are always badly torn up by shells, making it necessary to go a great part of the distance in low speed, and night driving is complicated by the fact that when artillery moves in this zone it moves where possible at a trot or gallop and cedes the road to nobody. Back of the lines ambulances are often given the road by courtesy, but under fire the right of way belongs to the artillery, come what may. When night driving is further complicated by gas, and we have to wear our masks, which are not easy to see and hear through, the danger of being wrecked by the

galloping artillery is often greater than the danger of being hit by shells.

But let us return to Joseph and his comrades, who disappeared from our view in the *boyous* leading from Cabaret. We know what happened to them only from piecing together their descriptions in the evacuation hospital later. As they went further into the din the stench and noise kept increasing. The French curtain-fire shrieked over their heads, protecting their advance and crashing above the German trenches now only a few hundred yards distant. German shells were breaking all around, and in many places the *boyou* became only an unprotected mass of overturned earth. Some of Joseph's comrades began to drop around him, for the division suffered a ten per cent loss before they ever reached the line and began fighting (yet in Napoleon's time, the books on military tactics advised a leader to fall back when his losses amounted to over five per cent).

It was midnight when the division reached the line of shell-craters and hastily reconstructed earthworks that had once been the first-line trenches—for neither French nor German have any real trenches, in the proper sense of the word, on this front. They simply dig into the shell-torn ground and hold on.

Crouching elbow to elbow with his comrades, Joseph waited for orders. His particular part in an attack is that of *"nettoyeur des tranchées,"* which means "trench-cleaner" in literal English; but he uses a long knife and an automatic pistol instead of a broom, and it is the German trenches and not the French that he cleans. Joseph is small, wiry, muscular, capable of lightning-like

rapidity in his movements. He follows immediately behind the bayonets, leaping into the carried trench or position, shooting and slashing as he leaps, pistol in left hand and knife in right, fighting it out to the death with those whom the bullets and bayonets overlooked as they swept onward. Joseph isn't so strong for the pistol, which he uses principally to protect himself, but he is a wonder with the knife. Before the war he was a book-keeper at Paris, and his most brutal diversion was the mild French form of association football on Sunday afternoons. He is engaged to be married, is a lover of flowers, and sings charming ballads to the accompaniment of the guitar.

This was the Joseph who leaped after his comrades, shrieking like a madman, when attack began.

Three minutes afterward he found himself standing knee-deep among writhing bodies, covered from head to foot with blood, his own blood and that of a dozen Germans. He was slightly wounded in the shoulder, but he had done his work.

Thirty seconds later he was half buried by an exploding shell, his hip and left arm being shattered.

Thirty hours later his surviving comrades found him, lying among the corpses, still conscious and moaning for water.

As soon as it was dark enough the stretcher-bearers brought him back to Cabaret, where a hypodermic injection mercifully eased his suffering while the temporary bandages applied by his comrades were removed and replaced by better dressings.

So he had his wish, though he was too far gone to

know it. We brought him back to Dugny in one of our *"belles petites voitures,"* and one of our own men rode inside (against all rules and precedents) to make it a little easier for him in case he should regain consciousness.

It makes it infinitely more real and personal and infinitely more terrible—this transportation of men whose names we know, of friends with whom we were singing and playing football in the sunshine only a few days ago at La Veuve—it makes our work harder in a way, but at the same time more worth while.

Joseph is going to get well. Also he is going to have the *croix de guerre* and the *medaille militaire*. As soon as he is strong enough to survive the railroad journey he will complete the last stage of his Odyssy as he began it, in a little box-car marked "8 Chevaux, 40 Hommes."

For Joseph the great war is over. He will be tenderly cared for in some big hospital in the interior; his sweetheart will come to visit him in the ward, and as soon as he is able to hobble about on crutches they will be married. Her husband will be a hero, he is one of the men who has saved France. But he will be a cripple for life.

Multiply Joseph by thousands of other Josephs who have gone through like experiences—then add the tragic background of the still other thousands of Josephs who will never come back to their sweethearts, and you may begin to have some idea of what it means to hold Verdun.

* * *

THE END

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BOSTON, MASS.

As the quick transportation of wounded—from the front to the nearest hospital—is so great a factor in saving their lives, the American Ambulance Field Service was organized soon after the beginning of the war, and during the subsequent two years its achievement has fully demonstrated the value of its purpose. It has now in the field more than 300 motor ambulances. These are driven by young American volunteers, most of whom are graduates of American universities. *To them has been successfully entrusted the vitally important matter of bringing the wounded in the shortest possible time from the trenches to places where the first surgical help can be given. Upon this first surgical help largely depends, naturally, the chance of the wounded surviving long enough to reach the base hospitals.* These ambulances are grouped in sections of twenty to thirty cars, and attached to the French Armies. *They carry wounded between the front and the Army Hospitals within the Army Zone.*

The French Army has cited these Sections more than twenty times for distinguished services; has conferred the Croix de Guerre, for bravery, on sixty-six members of the Service, and upon two, the Médaille Militaire, the highest honor for military valor in France.

This service with the French Armies at the front is wholly maintained through a special FIELD SERVICE FUND, and those desiring to give to it should send their contributions as directed below. Curtailing expenses to the lowest point consistent with efficiency, a monthly expenditure of approximately $18,000 is now found requisite. This amount is being raised by single gifts—or by monthly subscriptions for any number of months, or the duration of the war. These monthly contributions, of course, vary greatly, according to the means of those who are kind enough to help; in two or three cases extraordinarily generous amounts being given, and in many instances monthly sums ranging from $5 up to $100 having been promised. Needless to say, contributions of *any* size—monthly or single—will be most gratefully received. Guarantees for the year at present amount to about $7,000 monthly. As this sum, even with numerous additional gifts, is insufficient for current needs, it is very keenly hoped that those who during the past year have been so generous as to contribute to the purchase of the ambulances in use, and others who can now perhaps more fully appreciate the true worth of this work to France, may feel willing to do what they are able toward guaranteeing its continuation.

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